BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

ACHIEVEBC

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2007AE0023-000448
April 16, 2007

Ministry of Advanced Education

NEW BILL ASSURES KNOWLEDGE NETWORK'S UNIQUE ROLE

VICTORIA – Legislation paving the way for government to fulfil its vision for the Knowledge Network as the province's education broadcaster was introduced today by Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell.

"We promised to maintain and improve the Knowledge Network as B.C.'s educational public broadcaster, and this legislation is an important step in achieving our new vision for the network," Coell said. "The Knowledge Network Corporation Act sets out the framework that will allow the network to reach new heights with programming designed to help British Columbians live their lives, build their careers, and take part in their communities."

Under the act, the Knowledge Network's mandate is to:

- Promote lifelong learning in B.C. by providing quality educational programming.
- Inform and educate British Columbians about their province.
- Provide British Columbians with a unique television experience.
- Inform and educate British Columbians about issues relevant to them.
- Collaborate with the independent television and web media production sectors in B.C.

The network will be managed by a board of up to 11 directors appointed by government. Members of the current eight-member board, appointed in July 2006 to set a new direction, have been invited to serve on the network corporation's first board to provide continuity.

"The board is thrilled with the opportunity to revitalize and strengthen a wonderful public resource," said board chair Ron Burnett. "We intend to explore a wide variety of program production possibilities with other broadcasters and creators to enrich the excellent programming the network already offers."

About half the Knowledge Network's programs are specifically for children. Other topic areas include academic, arts and music, drama, history and culture, lifestyles, health and parenting, nature and the environment, science and technology, and social and political issues.

"We are looking forward to the Knowledge Network providing even better programs for the one and a half million viewers who tune in every week for information that will help them make informed decisions on personal, local, regional, national and global issues," Coell said.

-more-

The Province provides base funding of $6 million a year to the Knowledge Network, and last year added $1.4 million in one-time funding as the network made the transition to operating on its own, separate from the Open Learning Agency, which is being wound down.

-30-

1 factsheet(s) attached.

Media contact: Jennifer McCrea
Communications Director
250 952-6508
250 888-0023 (cell)

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

ACHIEVEBC

FACTSHEET

2007AE0023-000448
April 16, 2007

Ministry of Advanced Education

KNOWLEDGE NETWORK FACTS

- The Knowledge Network, based in Burnaby, began broadcasting in 1981, and became part of the Open Learning Agency in 1987 to co-ordinate the development of open learning distance education programs in B.C.
- After the Internet emerged as a more efficient way to provide distance learning, government decided to begin winding down the Open Learning Agency, which held the Knowledge Network's broadcast licence.
- Now that the Knowledge Network Corp. Act has been introduced, the network can apply for a broadcast licence in its own name from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Agency.
- Each week, over a quarter of British Columbians watch the network, which has the ninth largest prime time audience out of more than 200 TV channels available in B.C.
- The Knowledge Network is available on cable, satellite and over-the-air transmission throughout B.C. In Vancouver, the network is on Cable 5; in Victoria, Cable 4. The network is online at www.knowledgenetwork.ca.
- Programming statistics:
    - Original programming: 50 hours created per year, with 85 hours more of pre-licensed programming from independent producers in B.C. and across Canada.
    - Canadian content: 60 per cent of programming budget spent on Canadian shows.
    - Closed caption programming: 79 per cent of evening programming and 68 per cent of overall programming is closed captioned (February 2007).
    - Programming for preschoolers: 40 per cent of the network's schedule is dedicated to programs teaching preschool children the social and literacy skills they need to succeed in school.

-30-

Media contact: Jennifer McCrea
Communications Director
250 952-6508
250 888-0023 (cell)

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca.